protection of individual privacy of citizens and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

The National Commission for the Aged Bill, 2001—Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIAN): Further consideration of the motion, that is, The National Commission for the Aged Bill, 2001, moved by Dr. Karan Singh on the 6th May, 2005.

On 6th May, 2005, the discussion on the Bill was concluded. Now, the Minister has to reply.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I have carefully listened to the deliberations made by hon. Members of Parliament on 6th May, 2005. I appreciate their concern for older persons. Hon. Members have raised the following main points during the course of the discussion on the Bill.

The older people should have access to basic needs of life. They should remain integrated with their community life. The older people should be provided social, legal and health care. They should be given resources to develop their full potential. They should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of physical or mental abuse. A law should be made for making payment of maintenance allowances to the older people by their children in case they live unattended. The orphan homes and the oldage homes should be integrated. Some Members also expressed concern about the problem of poverty, treatment meted out to widows and the invasion of western culture as the root cause of breaking up of joint family system. In this regard, I would like to apprise the hon. Members of the House that the Government already has a National Policy on Older Persons, wherein all aspects concerning the aged have been addressed. The policy envisages State support for financial security, health care, shelter and other needs of the older persons so that they get opportunities to lead an active, productive and satisfying life. Further, in pursuance of the announcement of the policy, the Government has set

up a National Council for Older Persons, under the Chairmanship of Minsiter of Social Justice and Empowerment. The National Council for Older Persons is the highest body to advise and coordinate with the Government in the formulation and implementation of national policy and programmes for the welfare of the aged. The Council also works as a nodal point at the national level for redressing the grievances of the older persons and to represent their collective opinion to the Government. The Ministry has also set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee headed by the Secretary. Social Justice and Empowerment for effective implementation of the National Policy for Older Persons and for taking action on the recommendations of the NCOP. Further, the Ministry periodically reviews progress on the implementation of National Policy on old persons through meetings of National Council for Older Persons and the Inter-Ministerial Committee. Further, the Ministry supports programmes for the welfare of the elderly, through financial assistance to non-Governmental organisations under two schemes -- one, an integrated programme for older persons and second, the scheme for assistance to Panchayati Raj institutions, voluntary organisations, self-help groups. Under these schemes, financial assistance is provided for establishing and maintaining old-age homes, day-care centres, mobile medical units and construction of old-age homes. The Government of India and the State Governments have wide range of schemes for the benefit of elderly persons like old-age pension, priority for subsidised health care, fare concession in all modes of travel and supply of foodgrains to the indigent senior citizens free of cost. Taking into account the various problems being faced by the older persons, the Government is actively consulting the State Governments and the Union Territories to frame a model legislation for promoting the maintenance, care and protection of older persons. The salient features of the proposed Bill, *inter alia*, are care including financial, housing, clothing and companionship, requirements from the families or the State Government in case of older persons living below the poverty line, protection of their life and property, making adequate provisions for old-age pensions, setting up of old-age homes in each district and setting up of geriatric ward in each district hospital. A short write-up, containing these salient features, has been circulated to the State Governments and Union Territories, eliciting their views. As the expenditure on most of the provisions is to be met by the State Governments, an estimate about the financial implications of the Bill can only be made after the response

from the State Government is received. Since the proposed Bill covers most of the problems of older persons, as highlighted by the hon. Members, I request the hon. Member of Parliament, Dr. Karan Singh, to kindly withdraw the Bill. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Dr. Karan Singh, are you withdrawing the Bill or shall I put the motion to vote?

DR. KARAN SINGH: (NCT of Delhi): Sir, can I speak for two minutes?

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Okay.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, we had a very positive debate on this Bill in the last session. It received widespread support from all sections of the House and after that, I got a large number of letters from people around the country who felt very enthused and encouraged that Parliament was considering this because the National Rural Employment Scheme will help the young. The old also represent around six per cent of our population.

The Minister, in her reply, has assured that the Government is seized of the matter, and will itself come forward with a legislation and encourage the State Governments. I would urge that, first of all, there should be some time limit, whereby the State Governments reply because, sometimes, the matter gets prolonged. Secondly, apart from the State legislation, I do feel that some Central legislation is required. But in view of the assurance given by the Minister, I seek permission to withdraw the Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Has Dr. Karan Singh leave of the House to withdraw the Bill?

The Bill was, by leave, withdrawn.

The Salary, Allowances and Pension of members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 2004

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): The time allotted for this Bill is two hours. Shri Lalit Suri.

SHRI LALIT SURI (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, this is a very simple and short Bill. As mentioned in the Statement of Objects and